IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1-4 and 9 as set forth below.

Please add new dependent claims 10-11.

A complete claim listing begins on the next page.

1.   (currently amended)   A method operative in a work environment wherein entities to be scheduled each access a computer network using a client computer, comprising:

during a given time period, ~~enabling~~ each of a set of entities, irrespective of their seniority or ranking in the work environment, ~~to use the~~ <u>using an associated</u> client computer to identify a given schedule pattern set and to identify a set of one or more bids with respect to one or more schedules that are associated with that given schedule pattern set;

at the close of the given time period, using one or more processing devices to select a given set of the entities for scheduling with respect to the given schedule pattern set; and

using one or more processing devices to assign the given set of the entities to one or more candidate schedules that are associated with the given schedule pattern set.

2.   (currently amended) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of:

~~enabling the given entity to identify~~ <u>identifying</u> a set of sorting preferences associated with the given schedule pattern set.

3.   (currently amended) The method as described in claim 2 further including the step of ~~enabling an entity to identify~~ <u>identifying</u> a new given schedule pattern set and an associated set of sorting preferences during the given time period.

4.   (currently amended) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of ~~enabling an entity to select~~ <u>selecting</u> a different schedule pattern set, and ~~to identify~~ <u>identifying</u> a set of one or more bids associated with the different schedule pattern set during the given time period.

5.   (original) The method as described in claim 1 wherein the entity ranks the set of one or more bids associated with the given schedule pattern set.

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6.   (original) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of automatically ranking the set of one or more bids associated with the given schedule pattern set.

7.   (original) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of assigning a schedule to at least one entity that did not provide a bid for any candidate schedules that are associated with the given schedule pattern set.

8.   (original) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of deselecting a given set of the entities for scheduling with respect to the given schedule pattern set.

9.   (currently amended) Apparatus, for use in a work environment wherein entities to be scheduled each access a computer network using a client computer, comprising:

a processor;

code executable by the processor during a given time period to enable each of a set of entities, irrespective of their seniority or ranking in the work environment, to use the client computer associated with each entity to identify a given schedule pattern set and to identify a set of one or more bids with respect to one or more schedules that are associated with that given schedule pattern set, the entity using an associated client computer irrespective of the entity's seniority or ranking in the work environment; and

code executable by the processor at the close of the given time period and responsive to selection of a given set of the entities for scheduling with respect to the given schedule pattern set for assigning the given set of the entities to one or more candidate schedules that are associated with the given schedule pattern set.

10.   (new)   The method as described in claim 1 wherein a supervisor entity configures the given schedule pattern set such that a first entity can view and bid on at least one schedule in the given schedule pattern set for which a second entity cannot view or bid.

11.   (new)   The method as described in claim 1 wherein the first entity has a given status in the work environment that the second entity does not share.